



MISSISSIPPI FORESTRY ASSOCIATION

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March 29, 2021

Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality
Attention: Kim Caviness
P.O. Box 2261
Jackson, MS 39225

Dear Ms. Caviness:

Re: Part 6: Chapter 2: Mississippi Commission on Environmental Quality Regulations for Water Quality Criteria for Intrastate, Interstate, and Coastal Waters Adopted by the Mississippi Commission on Environmental Quality (February 25, 2106) Approved by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (January 18, 2017)
Modified for Triennial Review – Latest Revisions – February 1, 2021

The Mississippi Forestry Association (MFA) was founded in 1938 to unify members of the forestry community. MFA is the only statewide non-profit organization dedicated to sustaining Mississippi's forests, and members and staff work to accomplish the MFA mission through public affairs, communications, and education programs that promote conservation, development, and wise use of forestland and resources.

MFA has had a long working relationship with the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MS DEQ) in support of water quality in Mississippi. We saw the "Mississippi Proposed Revisions to Water Quality Criteria" in your February 22, 2021, and March 18, 2021, newsletters, with limited additional materials provided.

Historically, MFA has been part of stakeholder groups that have provided input and feedback to MS DEQ on topics related to water quality in Mississippi. We were surprised to see that none of those previous communication channels were used to make this notice more broadly publicized. Given the short timeline, MFA would request that MS DEQ consider allowing additional comment time after the public hearing to give our members more time to fully understand any and all proposed changes in this triennial update.

MFA would like to applaud MS DEQ for recognizing forestry Best Management Practices (BMP), and the positive roll they have played in Mississippi for over 30 years, in the proposed updates. The partnership between MS DEQ and the Mississippi Forestry Commission to work collectively through the years on monitoring, outreach, and education efforts is to be applauded, and we request that the agencies continue collaborating on these positive efforts in the future. MFA would also encourage MS DEQ to clarify that existing forestry BMPs are acceptable and effective for any Outstanding Waters. MFA supports the BMPs in current form and would ask for significant stakeholder input before MS DEQ suggests any changes or modifications.

Additionally, MFA member, Weyerhaeuser NR Company, has submitted comments, and we would like to note our support and agreement with their statements. Finally, we appreciate the opportunity to provide additional comments on this topic after more data and information is released following the public hearing and any subsequent meetings of stakeholders.

Sincerely,

Dr. J. Tedrick Ratcliff Jr.
Executive Vice President
Mississippi Forestry Association